

Americans to benefit from economic advancement.

Increasing the minimum wage is certainly not the only option. Congress should be looking elsewhere to do even more to ensure that children born into low income families aren't locked into a life of poverty. But increasing the minimum wage would be a step toward that goal. It would also serve as an indication that Congress appreciates the daunting challenges posed by income inequality and is willing to confront them.

Mr. President, I fully support an increase in the minimum wage and I hope that we can come together to find a way to reconsider the minimum wage bill and move it forward.

FORD ADMINISTRATION'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, this year marks the 40th anniversary of Gerald R. Ford taking the oath of office and becoming the 38th President of the United States. The Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids, MI will be commemorating this significant anniversary throughout 2014 by highlighting the impact of his service to our country.

Gerald Ford took the oath of office on August 9, 1974, in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, the Vietnam war, and President Nixon's resignation, a very tumultuous time in our Nation's history. He reflected this when he stated:

I assume the Presidency under extraordinary circumstances . . . This is an hour of history that troubles our minds and hurts our hearts.

Although he was born in Omaha, NE, his family made Grand Rapids, MI, their home very soon after his birth. After high school, he attended the University of Michigan and played football for the Wolverines, earning the designation of Most Valuable Player. Choosing to attend law school instead of pursuing a professional football career, he completed his law degree at Yale University and then returned to Michigan, where he started a law practice.

After serving with the U.S. Navy during World War II, he returned to his home State where he became a partner in a Grand Rapids law firm and involved in the political scene. His experiences in the war led him to reject his previously isolationist leanings and adopt an outlook of internationalism. As a result, at the age of 35, he challenged the isolationist incumbent for Michigan's Fifth Congressional District in Congress and won.

He served his district, our State, and the Nation honorably. He was reelected 12 times, each with more than 60 percent of the vote. As a new Congressman, he quickly established a reputation for personal integrity, hard work, and the ability to deal effectively with both Republicans and Democrats, qualities that would define his entire

political career. During his time in Congress, he was appointed to the Appropriations Committee and rose to prominence on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. He was well respected by his colleagues and was a leader in the Republican Party, serving as the minority leader for 8 years.

After the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew, Ford was nominated by President Nixon and confirmed by Congress to fill the vacancy. Less than a year later, Nixon resigned and Ford became President, making him the first President who was not elected to either the Presidency or Vice Presidency.

As President, Gerald Ford was confronted with the challenges of dealing with inflation, reviving a depressed economy, solving chronic energy shortages, and trying to ensure world peace. He described himself as a moderate in domestic affairs, an internationalist in foreign affairs, and a conservative in fiscal policy. Respected for his integrity and openness, he worked to restore our country's trust and confidence in the Presidency.

One of his first acts as President was to pardon Richard Nixon before criminal charges were brought against him. Despite strong negative public reaction and political backlash, Ford maintained that this was the right thing to do for the good of the country, and history has borne this out. When the new President, Jimmy Carter, took the oath of office, President Carter summed up the sentiment expressed by many about Ford's Presidency by saying, "For myself and for our Nation, I want to thank my predecessor for all he has done to heal our land."

Gerald Ford and his wife Betty continued to be active in the political process after leaving office. We are proud that Gerald Ford was from Michigan and an important part of the Ford legacy lives on through the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library in Ann Arbor, MI, and the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum in Grand Rapids.

I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing our 38th President and his outstanding contributions to our country on the 40th anniversary of his Presidency.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

PLYMOUTH COUNTY, IOWA

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State, and it has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

I have always believed in accountability for public officials, and this, my

final year in the Senate, is an appropriate time to give an accounting of my work across four decades representing Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills. But I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Plymouth County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community.

Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to secure funding in Plymouth County worth over \$11 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than \$1 million to the local economy.

Of course my favorite memories of working together have to include working with community leaders on the renovation of the American Legion building in LeMars. The funding allowed for a new glass block window and improvements to the existing front door to meet code on the first floor and the replacement of windows, repainting, and new signage on the second floor.

Among the highlights:

Main Street Iowa: One of the greatest challenges we face—in Iowa and all across America—is preserving the character and vitality of our small towns and rural communities. This isn't just about economics; it is also about maintaining our identity as Iowans.

Main Street Iowa helps preserve Iowa's heart and soul by providing funds to revitalize downtown business districts. This program has allowed towns like LeMars to use that money to leverage other investments to jumpstart change and renewal. I am so pleased that Plymouth County has earned \$30,000 through this program. These grants build much more than buildings; they build up the spirit and morale of people in our small towns and local communities.

Investing in Iowa's economic development through targeted community projects: In Western Iowa, we have worked together to grow the economy by making targeted investments in important economic development projects including improved roads and bridges, modernized sewer and water systems, and better housing options for residents of Plymouth County. In many cases, I have secured Federal funding that has leveraged local investments and served as a catalyst for a whole ripple effect of positive, creative changes. For example, working with mayors, city council members, and local economic development officials in Plymouth County, I have fought for

funding for Head Start, school construction, and dialysis center projects worth more than \$1 million, helping to create jobs and expand economic opportunities.

School grants: Every child in Iowa deserves to be educated in a classroom that is safe, accessible, and modern. That is why, for the past decade and a half, I have secured funding for the innovative Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program—better known among educators in Iowa as Harkin grants—for public schools construction and renovation. Across 15 years, Harkin grants worth more than \$132 million have helped school districts to fund a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools. In many cases, these Federal dollars have served as the needed incentive to leverage local public and private dollars, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect within a school district. Over the years, Plymouth County has received \$462,349 in Harkin Grants.

Agricultural and rural development: Because I grew up in a small town in rural Iowa, I have always been a loyal friend and fierce advocate for family farmers and rural communities. I have been a member of the House or Senate Agriculture Committee for 40 years—including more than 10 years as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Across the decades, I have championed farm policies for Iowans that include effective farm income protection and commodity programs; strong, progressive conservation assistance for agricultural producers; renewable energy opportunities; and robust economic development in our rural communities. Since 1991, through various programs authorized through the farm bill, Plymouth County has received more than \$3.4 million from a variety of farm bill programs.

Keeping Iowa communities safe: I also firmly believe that our first responders need to be appropriately trained and equipped, able to respond to both local emergencies and to statewide challenges such as, for instance, the methamphetamine epidemic. Since 2001, Plymouth County's fire departments have received over \$325,229 for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

Disability rights: Growing up, I loved and admired my brother Frank, who was deaf. But I was deeply disturbed by the discrimination and obstacles he faced every day. That is why I have always been a passionate advocate for full equality for people with disabilities. As the primary author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, and the ADA Amendments Act, I have had four guiding goals for our fellow citizens with disabilities: equal opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. Nearly a quarter century since passage of the ADA, I see remarkable changes in communities everywhere I go in

Iowa—not just in curb cuts or closed captioned television but in the full participation of people with disabilities in our society and economy, folks who at long last have the opportunity to contribute their talents and to be fully included. These changes have increased economic opportunities for all citizens of Plymouth County, both those with and without disabilities, and they make us proud to be a part of a community and country that respects the worth and civil rights of all of our citizens.

This is at least a partial accounting of my work on behalf of Iowa, and specifically Plymouth County, during my time in Congress. In every case, this work has been about partnerships, co-operation, and empowering folks at the State and local level, including in Plymouth County, to fulfill their own dreams and initiatives. And, of course, this work is never complete. Even after I retire from the Senate, I have no intention of retiring from the fight for a better, fairer, richer Iowa. I will always be profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of Iowa as their Senator.●

LYON COUNTY, IOWA

● **Mr. HARKIN.** Mr. President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State. It has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

I have always believed in accountability for public officials, and this, my final year in the Senate, is an appropriate time to give an accounting of my work across four decades representing Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills. But I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Lyon County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community.

Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to secure funding in Lyon County worth over \$1.2 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than \$6.2 million to the local economy.

Of course my favorite memory of working together has to be our shared

commitment to school construction and modernization. Iowa students cannot learn in buildings that are falling apart. Working together with State and local communities, this funding has ensured Iowa students are learning in schools that are safe and modern. It was an investment in Iowa communities and its kids, and I look forward to learning about the renovations made possible in Lyon County.

Among the highlights:

School grants: Every child in Iowa deserves to be educated in a classroom that is safe, accessible, and modern. That is why, for the past decade and a half, I have secured funding for the innovative Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program—better known among educators in Iowa as Harkin grants for public schools construction and renovation. Across 15 years, Harkin Grants worth more than \$132 million have helped school districts to fund a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools. In many cases, these Federal dollars have served as the needed incentive to leverage local public and private dollars, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect within a school district. Over the years, Lyon County has received \$1,197,251 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Lyon County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling \$34,181.

Agricultural and rural development: Because I grew up in a small town in rural Iowa, I have always been a loyal friend and fierce advocate for family farmers and rural communities. I have been a member of the House or Senate Agriculture Committee for 40 years—including more than 10 years as Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Across the decades, I have championed farm policies for Iowans that include effective farm income protection and commodity programs; strong, progressive conservation assistance for agricultural producers; renewable energy opportunities; and robust economic development in our rural communities. Since 1991, through various programs authorized through the farm bill, Lyon County has received more than \$299,000 from a variety of farm bill programs.

Keeping Iowa communities safe: I also firmly believe that our first responders need to be appropriately trained and equipped, able to respond to both local emergencies and to statewide challenges such as, for instance, the methamphetamine epidemic. Since 2001, Lyon County's fire departments have received over \$397,392 for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

Wellness and health care: Improving the health and wellness of all Americans has been something I have been passionate about for decades. That is why I fought to dramatically increase funding for disease prevention, innovative medical research, and a whole